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ABSTRACT

This collection of abstracts is part of a continuing series providing information on recent doctoral dissertations. The 39 titles deal with a variety of topics, including the following: (1) the assessment of writing ability; (2) small group discussion as a prewriting activity; (3) effects of evaluation methods in learning technical writing skills; (4) the effects of prior knowledge and audience on writing; (5) teaching creative writing; (6) a study of the word processor and composing; (7) using a learning styles approach to teaching composition; (8) parent involvement in the composing processes of kindergarten children; (9) a comparison of two approaches to using writing across the curriculum; (10) sentence combining; (11) literature as equipment for writing; (12) regression in student writing performance as a function of unrecognized changes in task complexity; (13) using transparencies in a model workshop to develop learning, teaching, and writing; (14) criteria for and consistency in freshman composition evaluation; (15) the validation of the writing assessment test; (16) acquiring practical reasoning through teacher-student interaction in dialogue journals; (17) letter writing; and (18) small group writing conferences. (EL)

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Barry, Francis Joseph
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AN INVESTIGATION OF THE ASSESSMENT OF WRITING ABILITY FROM A DECLARATIVE/PROCEDURAL PERSPECTIVE

Order No. DA8503973

ACKERMAN, TERRY ALLAN, PH.D. *The University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee*, 1984. 141pp. Supervisor: Professor Philip Smith

A moderate correlational relationship is often observed between subscores from direct and indirect methods of writing assessment. Using a cognitive model of writing, specific processes are identified for each method of writing assessment. Based upon these processes, a hypothetical ordinal continuum, representing the different procedures measured by each type of assessment, is proposed. This continuum, believed to parallel the stages of writing development, is investigated using four measures of writing ability: a standardized achievement test, a transformed version of the standardized test and two different essay tasks. Confirmatory factor analysis of the test subscores suggest that differences between the direct and indirect types of writing assessment are caused, at least partially, by the differences in the number of identifiable procedures required by each method.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION AS A PREWRITING ACTIVITY: A NATURALISTIC INQUIRY

Order No. DA8421425

BARRY, FRANCIS JOSEPH, PH.D. *New York University*, 1984. 208pp. Chairman: Professor John S. Mayher

This study was a naturalistic inquiry into certain sociolinguistic and composing behaviors of four average ability twelfth graders as they engaged in prewriting discussion and later performed written tasks--an essay and a story.

The inquiry focused on three areas: discourse moves, social skills, and procedures for planning and developing the written work. The participants tape recorded their discussions and were videotaped as they performed the writing. Utterances were coded for discourse moves and social skills, and the videotapes provided nonverbal data concerning physical activity and procedures during writing. At the conclusion of the double writing assignment, the researcher interviewed the participants individually to learn their understanding of their planning and developing procedures.

The participants experienced greater difficulty structuring a unified and coherent discussion for the poetic assignment (story) than for the transactional (essay). Their social skills displayed a high degree of group awareness and acceptance of individual participation.

No participant wrote an outline, and only one wrote notes. The planning and developing procedures followed a pattern in which each student formulated a theme or plot and then by a trial and error process of accretion, wrote, with pauses to reflect, re-read and plan.

The participants in this study displayed an incomplete understanding of the composing process. The study concludes that prewriting discussion can be a useful social activity for stimulating invention and for relieving anxiety in students as they proceed through the various phases of composing.

AN INVESTIGATION OF TWO WRITING PROCESS INTERVENTIONS ON THE RHETORICAL EFFECTIVENESS OF SIXTH GRADE WRITERS

Order No. DA8424028

BEACH, MICHAEL T., ED.D. *Rutgers University The State U. of New Jersey (New Brunswick)*, 1984. 143pp. Chairperson: Maurie Hillson

The problem of instructing students in ways that contribute to development in their rhetorical effectiveness in writing was the focus of this investigation. The effects of two writing process interventions, the New Jersey Writing Project (NJWP), and Sustained Student Summary Writing (SSSW), on students' rhetorical competencies in expressive and persuasive writing were examined.

A quasi-experimental design (Borg & Gall, 1976), made up of one comparison and two treatment groups (N = 128), was used in three schools with a population of sixth grade writers. The two treatment groups consisted of students exposed, in their respective schools, to the New Jersey Writing Project (NJWP) and Sustained Student Summary Writing (SSSW). Students in the comparison school received no formal exposure to a specific writing intervention. Pre and post study samples of expressive and persuasive writing were collected and evaluated by a group of readers using the Primary Trait Scoring (PTS) measure. An analysis of covariance, using the .05 confidence level, was applied to the collected data. Scheffé procedures were used as a post hoc analysis.

Within the limitations of this study, the following conclusion was formulated: Comparing the three groups, students in the New Jersey Writing Project (NJWP) scored significantly higher on the expressive writing dimension, while students in the comparison group scored significantly higher on the persuasive writing dimension. The null hypothesis, which stated that no differences existed between the three groups on students' rhetorical competencies in expressive and persuasive writing, was partially rejected. Evidence was found in the New Jersey Writing Project group to support a developmental relationship between the writing intervention and students' abilities in expressive writing. Although data on the post hoc analysis was insufficient to justify conclusions concerning the relationship between the comparison group and students' competencies in persuasive writing, they did indicate the need for further investigation into this relationship.

EFFECTS OF EVALUATION METHODS IN LEARNING TECHNICAL WRITING SKILLS

Order No. DA8425613

BRIDGE, THOMAS GAYLORD, PH.D. *University of Missouri - Columbia*, 1984. 97pp. Supervisor: Dr. Franklin J. King

Purpose. The purpose of this study was to ascertain the relative effects that three selected evaluation methods would have on student's level of achievement in learning technical report writing skills. The three methods utilized were: (1) traditional teacher evaluation, (2) formal evaluation and (3) formal evaluation and computer aided evaluation.

Method of Research. The students in the study were selected to represent the population of industrial technology majors at Western Illinois University. Data for the study were obtained by a posttest only measure of student achievement levels in learning technical report writing skills. One group was the control group and received only the traditional teacher evaluation as feedback information for their technical reports. The second group received a formal evaluation instrument as feedback information. The third group received a combination of a formal evaluation instrument and a computer aided evaluation analysis report as feedback. The formal evaluation instrument was developed for this study by a survey of professional

technical writers and technical writing teachers. The computer aided evaluation analysis was developed from the General Motors STAR program with enhancements by integrating WordStar and SpellStar programs. The data were analyzed by a one-way analysis of variance technique and an F-test to answer the research question which sought to ascertain if differing levels of evaluation feedback information would significantly effect achievement learning of technical report writing skills among groups. Additionally, a Scheffe method of comparison was applied to ascertain any significant differences between comparison groups.

Findings. The study revealed significant differences among the groups in achievement levels. The F-value of 3.82 was attained and when compared to an F-value table at two and fifty-seven degrees of freedom, significant differences were found to exist.

Conclusion. The following conclusion was drawn: Instructors may expect their students to achieve higher levels of technical report writing skills when they utilize a combination of a formal evaluation instrument and computer aided evaluation as a part of the instructional procedure rather than when they receive only traditional teacher evaluation.

THE RELATIONSHIP OF HOLISTIC AND OBJECTIVE MEASUREMENT OF TRANSCRIPTION AND COMPOSITION COMPONENTS IN WRITTEN LANGUAGE

Order No. DA8421672

BRYANT, BRIAN REID, PH.D. *The University of Texas at Austin*, 1984. 166pp. Supervising Professor: J. Lee Wiederholt

This study examined the relationships between holistic and objective measurement techniques when selected aspects of written language were evaluated. Specifically, subelements (i.e., idea generation, vocabulary, grammar, capitalization/puctuation, spelling, and legibility), components (transcription and composition), and total performance in writing were selected for examination. One hundred eighty subject protocols, 30 each from grades 3 through 8, were selected from the standardization sample of the Test of Written Language (Hammill and Larsen, 1983) for use in this study. Subtest scores were available on each protocol and represented performance based on an objective measure. Trained evaluators examined the writing samples from the TOWL and their ratings on an analytic scale designed by the author performance based on a holistic measure.

Correlational procedures were employed to determine the relationships which existed between performance scores on TOWL subtests and the corresponding holistic subelement ratings of evaluators. Results indicated that moderate relationships existed between the evaluation methods for all writing subelements.

Correlation procedures were also used to examine the relationships which existed between composition scores when evaluated using objective and holistic measures, and transcription scores when evaluated using objective and holistic measures. Resulting coefficients suggested that a moderate relationship existed between evaluation methods when components of writing were measured.

Correlational procedures were again employed to examine the interrelationships which existed among objective test scores, analytic/holistic scores, and general impression/holistic scores when total writing performance was measured. Results indicated the existance of strong interrelationships among evaluation measures.

Several analyses were conducted to determine if student classifications into one of four categories (high composition/high transcription, high composition/low transcription, low composition/low transcription, or low composition/low transcription) were affected by method of evaluation. Results indicated that agreement between placements based on evaluation measures was significantly greater than that which would be expected by chance. These findings illustrate the value of both objective and holistic measures in evaluating student writing performance. The implications for general, remedial, and special education lie chiefly in the empirical documentation of inclinations and verification of the relationships between objective and holistic measurement techniques.

THE COMPOSING PROCESSES OF BLIND WRITERS

Order No. DA8501487

BRYANT, DEBORAH GOFORTH, PH.D. *North Texas State University*, 1984. 222pp.

An examination of the composing processes of blind writers was conducted to determine the strategies used by these composers. Two individuals blind from birth and two persons blinded later in life participated in the study.

Using participant observation and stimulated recall, the researcher examined the composing processes of these subjects. Each individual participated in four writing sessions and used the compose-aloud technique whereby the composer repeats orally any thoughts that occur during writing. In addition, an interview was conducted with each participant which provided a writing history, attitude toward writing, and composing strategies.

Results of the research indicated that blind writers use the same basic processes of writing as reported for sighted writers. Blind writers in this study did not make written plans prior to writing and spent between one and four minutes in prewriting. Planning was an ongoing feature of the composing process. The writers in this study demonstrated the recursive feature of composing. Rescanning was a continual part of their composing sessions. Three of the subjects reported using rescanning for planning and editing. One individual reported using rescanning for editing only.

Some differences were found in the blind writers as compared to the research on sighted composers. First, blind writers averaged 38 rescansions per essay, while research on the sighted reported approximately six rescansions in each session. The difference in the number of rescansions between these two groups may be a result of the blind writer's need to locate position on the page or from a difference in short-term memory in the sighted and nonsighted.

Writers blind from birth demonstrated a difference in the ability to organize an essay in the extensive mode. These composers made no global plans. Rather they allowed the writings to unfold as they wrote. This research would indicate that sight may have a role in composing

THE EFFECTS OF PRIOR KNOWLEDGE AND AUDIENCE ON WRITING

Order No. DA8428407

CHESKY, JOHN ALAN, ED.D. *University of Kentucky*, 1984. 136pp. Director: Dr. Elfrieda Hiebert

This study examined the effects of low and high prior knowledge and peer and teacher audiences on students' writing. Eighty high school juniors wrote a letter to the editor. Half of the students wrote about a topic on which they had low prior knowledge ("tobacco price supports") and half wrote about a topic on which they had high prior knowledge ("the problem with teachers"). Half of the students in each prior knowledge group wrote to their peers and the other half wrote to their teacher.

Analyses of variance showed that the students in the high prior

knowledge group scored significantly higher than students in the low prior knowledge group on the measures of holistic scoring, essay length, and context-creating statements. Analyses of prior knowledge effects did not reveal statistically significant results, however, on the measures of cohesion, mean T-unit length, and errors. Also, analyses of audience effects and the interaction effect did not show significant mean differences on any of the writing measures.

In addition, analyses of prior knowledge effects revealed statistically significant results on three of the responses on the self-report survey: "involvement," "liking," and "ease." Again, analyses of audience effects and the interaction effect did not show significant differences on any of the Involvement Survey responses.

The correlational analyses also demonstrated statistically significant relationships between the three prior knowledge measures (fluency, organization, and combination) and several of the writing and affect measures.

In conclusion, students who wrote with a high level of prior knowledge wrote quantitatively more, qualitatively better, were more involved in their writing, liked their writing, and found the task of writing much easier than students who wrote with a low level of prior knowlege. Students who wrote for their peers as an ungraded activity did not, however, produce better written products than students who wrote for their teacher as a graded activity.

THE TEACHING OF CREATIVE WRITING IN SELECTED COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES, 1970-1980: ISSUES, ACTIVITIES, AND TRENDS

Order No. DA8503639

COTTON, HELEN DONALENE SMITH, PH.D. *George Peabody College for Teachers of Vanderbilt University*, 1984. 102pp. Major Professor: Robert Whitman

This study examines the issues, activities, and trends in teaching creative writing in American colleges and universities, 1970-1980. Information was obtained by reviewing articles, surveying a sample of 114 teachers, and examining forty-six course outlines.

Chapter I presents the rationale and states the problem: to identify and record issues, activities, and trends in order to provide teachers and students with resources to supplement present information. Chapter II reviews articles on the teaching of creative writing. Chapter III presents an analysis of questionnaire responses. Chapter IV presents information from the course outlines. Chapter V examines the findings.

Some of the findings are: that the teachers are usually qualified writers who think of themselves as specialists; that courses are available for most students; that most teachers use many and varied methods, no textbooks or few; that workshops, journals, and portfolios are popular; that publication is not necessarily a goal, but that the nurturing of the imagination and strengthening of writing skills are goals.

THE EFFECT OF HIGH SCHOOL WRITING EXPERIENCES ON SCORES ON THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN ENGLISH PLACEMENT TEST

Order No. DA8500669

CREZDEN, JOHN E., PH.D. *The University of Wisconsin - Madison*, 1984. 205pp. Supervisor: Professor Joseph F. Kauffman

This study examined the relationship between high school writing experiences and scores on the University of Wisconsin English Placement Test (UWEPT). Students' writing in English and non-English Department courses was analyzed to determine if those with more instruction in composition and increased frequency of writing opportunities scored higher on UWEPT than those who did not have similar experiences.

Information on high school writing was obtained by interviewing 65 randomly selected freshmen in the College of Letters and Science at UW-Madison. A questionnaire was developed asking students to describe writing experiences, including number of composition courses completed, and the frequency of writing and use of revision and prewriting activities in English and non-English Department courses. Other independent variables analyzed were high school rank, number of academic units, number of units of English, and self-assessment of writing skills compared to high school and college peers. Data on socioeconomic status were collected to determine its effect of UWEPT score.

A multiple regression analysis, using UWEPT as the dependent variable, and Pearson correlations were used to measure the association between UWEPT score and the variables describing high school writing.

None of the variables used in the multiple regression predicted UWEPT score. Significant correlations were found between UWEPT score and academic units, rank, composition courses completed, use of self-revision in composition courses, and self-assessment of writing skills compared to high school and college peers. Variables developed to measure frequency of writing and use of revision in literature and non-English Department courses showed no significant correlation with UWEPT score.

The findings confirm that instruction in composition is essential in developing good writing. The data suggest that UWEPT does not detect important differences in students' high school writing experiences and does not measure comprehensively students' writing abilities. Student responses indicate that they are not writing frequently in high school and using good writing techniques such as revision or rewriting activities.

Based on the findings, recommendations to develop a more comprehensive English placement test and to foster increased and better instruction in composition were presented.

A STUDY OF THE WORD PROCESSOR AND COMPOSING: CHANGES IN ATTITUDE AND REVISION PRACTICES OF INEXPERIENCED STUDENT WRITERS IN A COLLEGE COMPOSITION CLASS

Order No. DA8423553

EHRLICH, DIANE BERGER, PH.D. *The University of Iowa*, 1984. 259pp. Supervisor: Associate Professor John W. Conner

This study explored the effects of the computer as a word processor upon the composing process of student writers enrolled in a Composition course at Kirkwood Community College. A case study methodology was selected so as to observe the use of this technology in an instructional setting to answer several questions. (1) Is there a change in student attitude in regard to writing? (2) Are there changes in the amount and types of revisions that occur because students are using the word processor? (3) How can the word processor best be used for the teaching of writing?

Student attitude was observed through the use of student journals, writing profiles, attitude surveys, and direct observation. Students who used the word processor showed a definite improvement in their attitude towards writing and became more confident writers because of the ease of editing.

Six essays were analyzed according to a matrix which tabulated the operations of addition, deletion, substitution, and reordering; these operations were divided into domains of punctuation, word, phrase/clause, sentence, and meaning chunk. Whereas most students revising handwritten copies tend to make surface level revisions, these students who used the word processor expanded their operations to revise more holistically, reordering as well as adding, substituting, and deleting.

The group of students who continued to use the word processor

after they had revised the required three assignments wrote longer essays, revised more frequently, and exhibited a more positive attitude towards writing. Their additional experience allowed them to compose with the word processor without an interruption in the flow of their thoughts while they were writing.

Because the majority of the students working with the word processor began to see writing as a recursive process rather than a step-by-step procedure involving discrete stages, this seems a natural focus for teachers of writing. The word processor might best be used for teaching the recursive process, concentrating student attention upon revising rather than upon recopying.

USING A LEARNING STYLES APPROACH TO TEACHING COMPOSITION

Order No. DA8422184

FABIEN, MIRIAM GANNON, A.D. *The University of Michigan*, 1984. 262pp. Chairman: Richard W. Bailey

After examining the concept of learning styles and asserting their importance in the college classroom, the dissertation explores ways information about individual styles can be used in teaching writing. It investigates the hypothesis that helping students identify and develop their individual styles and adopt new strategies will result in better writing and improved attitudes about writing. The hypothesis was tested using two remedial composition classes, one of which was taught from a learning styles perspective while the other served as a comparison class. The conduct of the learning styles class involved three steps: (1) identification of students' individual learning styles in terms of field dependence/independence, sensory-motor preference, and level-of-processing; (2) instruction designed to develop the preferred style; and, (3) learning about and employing alternate strategies. The indicators used to measure outcomes were performance in writing impromptu essays, the amount of improvement in writing, and changes in attitude from beginning to end of semester. Outside readers evaluated the essays as to unity, coherence, adequate development, and accuracy. Attitude changes were measured by means of an objective Attitude Survey. Twenty-six students began each class. Results were mixed. Fourteen (of 17) comparison students wrote final essays judged competent while 12 (of 20) learning styles students did so. Improvement was shown by twelve comparison and eleven learning styles students. Changes in attitudes were all favorable in the learning styles class. Two changes in the comparison class were favorable; all others were unfavorable. Three factors may have influenced the outcome of the impromptu writing scores: (1) six low readers: (10.0 or below) completed the learning styles class whereas none completed the comparison class; (2) the comparison instructor added a familiar topic to those intended for the final essay: and, (3) the learning styles instructor did not emphasize the "three reasons" pattern of organization sufficiently.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN THE COMPOSING PROCESSES OF KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN

Order No. DA8429217

GREEN, CONSTANCE RUTH, PH.D. *The University of Florida*, 1984. 192pp. Chairperson: Linda Leonard Lamme

This study investigated the impact of a home composing curriculum on kindergarten children's concepts about print (a measure of reading readiness), writing fluency (the number of words children can write), and writing achievement. In addition, the study investigated gender differences on the above measures, types of writing done by children at home, and family members with whom children wrote.

A sample of 74 children was drawn from four kindergarten classes, two at a university laboratory school and two at a public school. Parents of children in the treatment group participated in a parent workshop and received a booklet which introduced the concept of writing with young children, the importance of writing, and the interrelationship between writing and reading. During the ten-week treatment period parents and children wrote together at home several times each week. The home writing samples were brought to school for sharing time with other children in the treatment group.

Data were analyzed by analysis of covariance, using the *Concepts about Print* test as the covariate. This procedure was conducted for each of the five dependent variables: *Concepts about Print* posttest, writing fluency, and three writing achievement samples. The treatment group was found to be significantly higher on the *Concepts about Print* test, writing fluency, and the first posttest of writing achievement. There were no significant gender differences on any of the measures.

Data from parent response sheets indicated that these children wrote notes, letters, and lists more than other types of writing. They wrote with their mothers or alone more often than with other family members.

The findings of this study suggest that a flexible home composing curriculum, combined with the sharing of writing at school can have an impact on reading readiness, the number of words children can write, and possibly writing ability.

A COMPARISON OF TWO APPROACHES TO USING WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Order No. DA8421117

HANRAHAN, CALVIN MACCLAREY, ED.D. *University of Georgia*, 1984. 95pp. Director: Dr. Carol J. Fisher

Because of recent emphasis upon the process of writing, rather than the product of writing, educators see writing not only as a means of communicating knowledge, but also as a part of the acquisition of knowledge. What is not yet clear is whether writing about a discipline other than English should be an integral part of the English composition class, dual subject approach, or whether writing about a discipline should be conducted within the discipline, single subject approach (Kinneavy, 1983). Over a two-year period, writing samples, writing attitude surveys, and final grades in a history class were collected to determine which of the two approaches to writing about and within a discipline are effective in improving quality of writing, changing attitude toward writing, and enhancing learning. One group had a dual class program in which World Civilization content served as the reading content for the English class, and the students' writing assignments were about the World Civilization content. A second group had a single class program in which the content and writing assignments in the English class were the same as in all of the English classes at the college. The World Civilization class was the same for both groups; the students wrote more within the discipline under the direction of a professor who had received training at two writing across the curriculum workshops. The English professor received the same training. Pre-writing and post-writing samples and pre-writing attitude and post-writing attitude surveys were taken from each group as well as final exam grades in the World Civilization courses. The writing samples and attitude surveys were scored, and t-tests were used to determine differences between pre- and post-writing samples and pre- and post-attitude surveys. Pearson product-moment correlations were used to determine relationships between post-writing samples and post-attitude surveys and between post-writing samples and final World Civilization grades.

There were no significant differences in the pre-writing and post-writing samples of both the dual subject group and the single subject group. There were significant differences in the pre-writing attitude and post-writing attitude surveys of the dual subject group, but there

were no significant differences in the pre-writing attitude and post-writing attitude surveys of the single subject group. There was no significant correlation between post-writing samples and post-writing attitude surveys for both groups, and there was no significant correlation between post-writing samples and final exam grades in World Civilization for both groups.

THE EFFECTS OF IMPLEMENTING PROCESS WRITING INTO A SEVENTH GRADE ENGLISH CURRICULUM

Order No. DA8425249

HAYES, BARBARA L., ED.D. *Delta State University*, 1984. 114pp.

The study examined the effects of a nine-week process writing unit upon seventh grade students in two English classes. It also observed changes in the curriculum of the school's other seventh grade English classes.

Subjects (N = 139) were 12 and 13-year-old students in a junior high school's six English classes. Two classes (N = 42) became the study's treatment group exposed to a nine-week process writing unit. The other four English classes (N = 97) were observed for changes in the usual classroom procedures as a result of English faculty share sessions.

The Language Expression and Language Mechanics subtests of the California Achievement Tests were administered as pretests and posttests to measure changes in the treatment group's language ability. Pretest and posttest writing samples from all subjects indicated changes in the writing ability of both groups. A follow-up questionnaire and an interaction analysis provided data on the effects of the faculty share sessions.

The findings led to the conclusion that a process writing unit in nine weeks did not improve language ability skills of the treatment group but did allow the students to maintain these skills. Seventh grade students may need more practice of skills, also, to improve their writing ability when writing is holistically rated. The range of writing ability as measured by the study's analytic scale may have been insufficient. Time constraints may have affected the rating procedure. Finally, with encouragement, teachers in the study may introduce the process approach into the school's English curriculum. Also, students in the treatment group perceived writing to be enjoyable.

Three curriculum recommendations came from the findings. The school's principal might encourage the English teachers to continue the share sessions, to become change agents, and to be trained in holistic scoring.

Several recommendations for further research were made. This study should be replicated, using a longer time period. Rater training and rating procedures using time as a variable should be investigated. Comparisons between university and secondary writing instructors as raters should be made. Procedures should be investigated by which secondary English teachers can become more effective change agents.

AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY OF SENTENCE COMBINING AS A MEANS OF IMPROVING SYNTACTIC MATURITY, WRITING QUALITY AND GRAMMATICAL FLUENCY IN THE COMPOSITIONS OF REMEDIAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Order No. DA8424227

HAYES, IRA, ED.D. *Columbia University Teachers College*, 1984. 135pp. Sponsor: Professor Lucy McCormick Calkins

This experiment tested three related hypotheses--whether remedial eleventh grade students trained in sentence combining would show more growth in syntactic maturity, greater improvement in writing quality, and greater reduction in incidence of basic errors than similar students in traditional classes. Ninety remedial students were randomly assigned to one of four classes, two of which (experimental group) received twenty six lessons in sentence combining in one semester, while the other two (control group) had none. Each of two teachers taught an experimental and control class.

Data on six factors of syntactic maturity and three factors of grammatical fluency (run-ons, fragments, verb inflection errors) were collected and analyzed for significance at the .05 level from narrative compositions students wrote as pre and post tests. To compare writing quality of the two groups, a system of forced choices between matched pairs of post test compositions was used.

Results showed that, when compared to the control group, sentence combiners experienced significant growth on two of six factors of syntactic maturity and approached significant growth on two others. One teacher was more successful than the other with her sentence combining group. The comparison of writing quality favored neither group. One teacher, however, was more successful with the control group, the other with the experimental group. The study thus suggests that teacher personality, rather than a particular pedagogy, may account for some effectiveness in teaching writing skills. In assessing grammatical fluency, differences between groups were insignificant in number of run-ons and verb errors. The experimental group wrote significantly fewer fragments, but incidence of error here was minute to begin with.

One explanation of the results is that eleventh grade basic writers are part of a syndrome of failure. Sentence combining instruction may be somewhat successful in altering their syntactic behavior. However, in this study, when compared to conventional methods, it was not superior in improving writing quality. Both methods were ineffective in teaching error reduction. One speculates whether twenty-six lessons in one semester is enough with any method for such writers to gain control over sentences, reduce error, and improve writing quality.

WRITING IN A SCIENCE CLASS: A CASE STUDY OF THE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN WRITING AND LEARNING

Order No. DA8421446

HEALY, MARY K., PH.D. *New York University*, 1984. 275pp. Chairperson: Professor Gordon Pradl

In the field of written composition there is general agreement that the act of writing is a powerful means of learning for the writer. Recently there has been interest in increasing the use of writing in school subjects across the curriculum. Current research in this area emphasizes the need for increased writing both as an aid to students' understanding of a subject and to their development as writers.

This study explored the connections between student writing and learning in a seventh grade biology class and documented the teacher's attempts to both introduce new types of writing assignments in her class and to treat this writing in ways more congruent with her growing understanding of her own writing processes.

The findings show that the teacher assigned writing almost every day, both for completion in class and for homework. But only rarely did the students use these writing assignments to make personal connections with new subject matter, to reconstruct it using their own language, or to raise speculative questions about the material. Possible reasons for this finding include the teacher's conflicting goals for her students' learning of science, her uncertain understanding of the role written language played in this learning, and her inconsistent instruction for and follow-up to the writing assignments she made. This latter inconsistency was found during all the stages of the writing assignment cycle, described in this study as all the events associated with a writing assignment, from the teacher's introduction and its reception by the students, to the teacher's follow-up to the students' work via oral or written comments, and her further instructions.

This study revealed a basic disjunction between the teacher's desire to introduce new writing assignments to aid her students' learning and her practical knowledge of how to introduce and follow-up such assignments effectively with her students.

The results of the study also yielded implications for the use of writing in science classes, in preservice and inservice courses for science teachers, and in possible directions for future research into the connections between writing and learning in subject area classrooms.

AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY OF THE EFFECTS OF INDEPENDENT WRITING TIME AND EXPOSURE TO A WRITING ROLE MODEL ON SELECTED KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN Order No. DA8423485

HOLMES, JULIA GOOLSBY, ED.D. *The University of Alabama*, 1984. 128pp.

This study was conducted to determine if there was any significant difference in the gain scores related to (a) concepts about print, (b) writing vocabulary, and (c) pre-reading performance among three groups of selected kindergarten children--an experimental group receiving opportunities for independent writing and exposure to a writing role model in the school environment, an experimental group receiving opportunities for independent writing without a writing role model, and a control group receiving no specific treatment. Subjects were placed randomly into one of three research groups to assure 24 subjects in each group. Experimental Group 1 was provided with independent writing time and exposure to a writing role model. Experimental Group 2 was provided with independent writing time, but without the writing role model. The Control Group was provided with writing skill sheets. The treatment was provided for 20 minutes, 3 days a week for the 6-week duration of the study.

The data revealed a significant difference between the experimental groups and the control group with respect to gains in concepts about print. There was a significant difference between Experimental Group 1 and the other two groups with respect to gains in writing vocabulary. Non-significant differences were found between the three groups with respect to gains in prereading skills.

The findings of this study suggested that independent writing time had positive effects on children's acquisition of concepts about printed language. It also suggested that independent writing time with exposure to a writing role model in the school environment had positive effects on children's writing vocabulary performance. However, independent writing time, with or without a writing role model, did not significantly affect the prereading skills as determined by The Metropolitan Readiness Tests.

Implications are that children come to school with a wealth of knowledge about print that could be applied to formal instruction in reading and writing. More research is needed to clarify the role of independent writing time in the school curriculum. Also, the effects of a writing role model at different grade levels need to be determined.

LITERATURE AS EQUIPMENT FOR WRITING: APPLICATIONS OF KENNETH BURKE'S DRAMATISM TO THE TEACHING OF COMPOSITION Order No. DA8422849

JACOBI, MARTIN JAMES, PH.D. *University of Oregon*, 1984. 168pp. Adviser: John T. Gage

Effective writing exhibits the intention of the author fitted to the needs, desires, interests, knowledge, experience--what Kenneth Burke calls the orientation--of the reader. To achieve this fit, authors must consider their topics from the perspectives of their audiences. Students who can do this are termed "relativists" by William G. Perry, and their cognitive acts demonstrate what Jean Piaget terms "formal operational thinking."

Burke, Perry, and Piaget believe that as human beings mature physically, intellectually, and ethically, they become able to develop the skills required for rhetorical fluency. Research on cognitive development shows that while college freshmen are capable of such skills, very few have developed them: Thus, instructors of freshmen composition teach an art requiring formal operational thinking and relativism to concrete dualists.

This study explores the usefulness of Burke's dramatism for improving rhetorical fluency, and offers some applications of his theory to a methodology and a method for teaching writing. The first two chapters describe the development and effects of orientations, and end by discussing how the "technological psychosis"--Burke's term for the socioeconomic *Zeitgeist* that has shaped the modern age--has led to instruction in composition that neglects cognitive development.

The last part of this study shows how Burke's dramatism can improve instruction in composition. His philosophy assumes the relativity of all orientations, considers the ramifications of this relativity, and offers a system for bridging orientations and thereby communicating. Applied to composition, dramatism would use literary works that that expose students to alternative, powerful perspectives, in order to introduce the disequilibrium which induces cognitive development. By means of dramatistic analyses, students gain experience in analyzing and understanding other perspectives so that they become able, when writing, to respond to the orientations of their audiences and thereby to discover and expand shared beliefs.

PERSUASIVE WRITING: ROLE OF WRITERS' VERBAL ABILITY AND WRITING ANXIETY WHEN WORKING UNDER TIME CONSTRAINTS Order No. DA8427549

KEAN, DONALD KENT, PH.D. *University of Georgia*, 1984. 84pp. Director: Shawn M. Glynn

The persuasive writing skills of undergraduate students were examined. The students were asked to produce persuasive letters to convince a school board to accept either a pro or con stand on corporal punishment in the classroom. In Experiment 1, the students were limited in the amount of time they had to produce the letters. In Experiment 2, the students had an unlimited amount of time to produce their letters. In both experiments, the students' Scholastic Aptitude Test verbal ability scores were positively correlated with holistic ratings of quality, and negatively correlated with their writing anxiety and mechanics errors. Taken together, the findings indicated that verbal ability facilitates persuasive writing performance, while writing anxiety inhibits it. the findings also provided some support for the notion that verbal ability largely determines writing anxiety.

Finally, the findings suggested that the availability of additional writing time does not necessarily lead to fewer mechanics errors or greater production of original arguments.

APPARENT REGRESSION IN STUDENT WRITING PERFORMANCE AS A FUNCTION OF UNRECOGNIZED CHANGES IN TASK COMPLEXITY Order No. DA8427067

KEECH, CATHARINE LUCAS, PH.D. *University of California, Berkeley*, 1984. 396pp.

The study addresses the problem of unexpected drops in scores on sequences of essay tests, identifying some cases of apparent regression in performance level as a function of unevaluated changes in the writing task: as some students attempt more in writing, they lose control of rhetorical niceties traditionally rewarded by readers, or they mix methods of text construction proper to different kinds of texts which they have not yet fully differentiated, causing performance scores to drop. A new method of classifying discourse types is presented which allows more precise linguistic and rhetorical

description of what students do differently from one writing occasion to the next, and which makes possible a set of testable hypotheses about the effects on performance scores of changes in task construal. The new discourse typology is compared to existing discourse classifying systems and illustrated by references to published essays and samples of student texts. In addition, a longitudinal sample of student essays from the high school years is analyzed and three case studies are presented which show how increases in text awareness *within* a text type (such as narration) appear to result in improved scores as the student moves from novice to expert status, while a switch to a *new* text type (as from narration to exposition) may result in drops in scores as students attempt to use composing skills different in kind from those formerly mastered. The study outlines a developmental hierarchy of tasks compatible with current theories of cognitive development and suggests new applications of those theories to writing, especially during the onset and consolidation of "formal operations." Implications for evaluating and teaching writing are discussed.

ENHANCEMENT OF MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS' WRITTEN PRODUCTION THROUGH THE USE OF WORD PROCESSING

Order No. DA8427887

KOENIG, JEFFERY L., PH.D. *Kansas State University*, 1984. 100pp.

This study examined the possibility the use of a word processor would significantly enhance the quality of students' written production. From a volunteer sample of middle-school students, forty subjects were randomly selected actually to participate. Those forty were randomly assigned to either a treatment or a control group and, under each condition, to either a power or a time constrained group. Treatment group subjects were trained in the use of a microcomputer word processor and produced a creative writing sample after training. Control subjects produced a freehand creative writing sample which was transformed to the word processor exactly as hand written. The students' writings were scored blind by an independent professional testing corporation, providing two separate scores, one for mechanics, another for usage. In addition, subjects were timed for completion and revision and completed semantic differential attitude surveys on the constructs 'writing', 'word processing', and 'computers'.

Four two-dimensional multivariate analyses of variance were utilized to examine differences among and across the four groups on the seven dependent measures. Univariate analyses of variance were run in the presence of significant multivariate effects and the Tukey Honestly Significant Difference technique was used to explore significant interactions.

Significantly more positive attitudes toward the constructs 'writing' and 'computers' were reported by control group subjects. While no differences were found on time for completion, treatment subjects spent significantly more time in the revision of their work. Treatment subjects were rated as having performed significantly better than control subjects on both mechanics and usage. No significant effects for the power versus time constrained conditions were found. Comparing the groups using attitude and performance scores simultaneously provided exactly the same conclusions as had the primary analyses.

The largely unexpected results of the attitude ratings were explained as an anomaly of the timing of administration of the scales. That treatment subjects did not spend significantly more time in completion was contrary to initial expectations, but apparently subjects using microcomputer word processing do spend more time in revising their work and do, in fact, produce superior products in terms of both mechanics and usage.

INFINITE CONVERSATION: A SOCIAL PERSPECTIVE ON RHETORICAL INVENTION

Order No. DA8426526

LEFEVRE, KAREN BURKE, PH.D. *Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute*, 1984. 419pp.

Since the nineteenth century, rhetorical invention has been portrayed in America as radically individualistic. The "Platonic" view of invention that prevails in composition theory and pedagogy sees truth as accessible by purely individual efforts. As in Plato's story of the soul that unfolds its wings when reminded of the ideal reality it once beheld, this view holds that invention is the recovery and expression of an individual's latent ideas, inner voice, or innate cognitive structures.

While this Platonic view encourages self-expression and reassures writers of their resources within, it presents an incomplete picture of invention. This study argues that invention is best understood as a social act in which an individual who is at the same time a social being interacts dialectically with society and culture in a distinctive way to create something new. Invention is seen as a rhetorical act involving speaking and writing, at times involving more than one person, beginning with a writer and ending with a reader, and extending over time through a series of transaction and texts.

Invention is social in many ways. One invents with language that is socially created and shared. Invention often occurs through an internal dialogue with an imagined other, in a socially learned process. Invention is enabled by an internal social construct of audience, which supplies premises and structures of beliefs that guide the writer. Writers involve other people as collaborators, or as editors whose comments aid invention, or as "resonators" who nourish the development of ideas. To create discourses such as contracts, treaties, and business proposals, two or more writers *must* invent together. Finally, invention is powerfully influenced by social collectives, such as institutions, bureaucracies, and governments, that transmit expectations and prohibitions, encouraging certain ideas and discouraging others.

The study discusses the implications of viewing invention as a social act and concludes that composition theory and pedagogy should be revised to take into account the social relationships that are a necessary foundation for rhetorical invention.

TEACHING ENGLISH COMPOSITION TO DEVELOPMENTAL STUDENTS AT THE COLLEGE LEVEL: A FREE WRITING/LANGUAGE STUDY APPROACH VERSUS A STRUCTURED WRITING/LANGUAGE STUDY APPROACH

Order No. DA8428129

LEWIS, RUBY MAE, PH.D. *Kansas State University*, 1984. 135pp.

The purpose of this study was to determine if a free writing/language study approach was more effective in teaching developmental students English composition as compared to a traditional structured writing/language study approach. Two intact experimental groups were used in this study, Group 1 serving as a treatment group and Group 2 as a comparison group. Group 1 (22 subjects) was exposed to the free writing/language study approach; Group 2 (30 subjects) was exposed to the structured writing/language study approach. The population was comprised of first-year and second-year students enrolled in the Developmental English Program at Grambling State University during the 1983 Fall Semester.

Writing samples were used as a measure of student writing performance. Ten compositions, inclusive of a pretest and posttest, were evaluated to determine the effects of the free writing and structured writing treatments. A holistic method of evaluation was employed in the scoring of individual compositions. Each composition was rated for overall quality using a *1* (lowest quality) through *6*

(highest quality) scale. Evaluations were based on the following criteria (Cooper and Odell, 1977): realization (the extent to which the writing directly reflects the writer's own experience), comprehension, organization, density of information, and control of written language.

Scores for the pretest and all other experimental compositions were analyzed by means of the t-test for two independent samples. The pretest and posttest scores were compared by means of the one-way analysis of variance technique.

The hypothesis tested was that of no significant difference in the quality of the writing performance of developmental students taught English composition using a free writing/language study approach as compared to developmental students taught using a traditional structured writing/language study approach. Based upon the results of the data collected in this study, the null hypothesis was retained at the 0.05 significance level. The free writing/language study approach and the structured writing/language study approach to teaching English composition appeared to be statistically equal in their effects on the writing performance of developmental students, with respect to the time element considered in administering the two treatments.

LEARNING, TEACHING, AND WRITING: A WORKSHOP USING TANSPARENCIES Order No. DA8424861

LOUTH, RICHARD HENRY, PH.D. *University of Virginia*, 1983. 209pp.

Part One. "Learning, Teaching, and Writing," concerns the relationship between learning theory and approaches to teaching writing. This discourse examines theory on learning and writing, explores traditional techniques and recent alternatives, and proposes a new technique, based on the principle of active learning, for teaching writing to large classes. Educators suggest that because learning is a process requiring initiative, contradiction, and experiment, the teacher serves best as a "facilitator" who, without forfeiting his traditional authority, maintains an atmosphere of inquiry and interaction. Also, researchers in writing describe writing as an active process of communication and imply that composition is best learned through active engagement in the process--through discovery, dialogue, and experiment in the classroom. Traditional "receptive" methods of instruction and recent "active" alternatives, despite their strengths, often prove ineffective in large writing classes. A modified workshop using the whole class, students' writing, and transparencies is demonstrated to be both theoretically sound and practical for teaching writing to classes of twenty or more students.

Part Two. "Faulkner's Sanctuaries," concerns Faulkner's ironic use of sanctuaries in seven novels. Most of Faulkner's characters seek and find sanctuary, but few find unambiguous havens. The majority of his characters discover double-natured sanctuaries--shelters both ordered and chaotic which provide refuge yet imprison. Bayard Sartoris, the Compsons, the Bundrens, Horace Benbow, Joe Christmas, Thomas Sutpen, and Ike McCaslin are primary examples. Faulkner's depiction of these characters and their sanctuaries demonstrates the irony of his vision.

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN IMPLEMENTATION LEVELS AND SELECTED FACTORS OF CONCERN AND COMPONENT USE OF IMPLEMENTERS OF A DISTRICT-DEVELOPED COMPOSITION CURRICULUM Order No. DA8503435

LYNESS, RUTH ANN FINKLE, PH.D. *The University of Nebraska - Lincoln*, 1984. 141pp. Advisers: Erwin H. Goldenstein, Clarice M. Ramsey

The study measured junior and senior high teachers' use of and concerns about a district-developed composition curriculum. Two surveys were administered during one month to 91 junior and senior high teachers of composition. Both surveys were based on the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) of the Research and Development Center for Teacher Education at the University of Texas at Austin. On a Program Use Checklist, teachers reported their use of twelve curriculum components; on a Concerns Questionnaire they reported their attitudes toward the curriculum.

For data analysis, subjects were divided by their Program Use Checklist scores into groups of (a) low and high implementers, (b) junior and senior high low implementers, and (c) junior and senior high high implementers. Concerns Questionnaire scores were aggregated into seven stages: awareness, informational, personal, management, consequence, collaboration, and refocusing. Use of a repeated measures analysis of variance and a Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance produced six findings: (1) There is significant interaction between implementation level (secondary low or high) and concerns about the curriculum. (2) There is no significant interaction between low implementers at school levels (junior or senior high) and concerns about the curriculum. (3) There is no significant interaction between high implementers at school levels (junior or senior high) and concerns about the curriculum. (4) There is a significant difference between secondary low and high implementers in use of curriculum components. (5) There is a significant difference between junior and senior high low implementers in use of curriculum components. (6) There is a significant difference between junior and senior high high implementers in use of curriculum components.

Study data have strong implications of inservice planning. These include: (a) junior and senior high curriculum inservice need not be differentiated, (b) consequence and refocusing concerns have first priority for attention, and (c) curriculum components need to be identified and rationale for use of each provided.

AN EXAMINATION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE MARSHALL WRITING WORKSHOP APPROACH IN TEACHING WRITING Order No. DA8425045

MCCLARAN, NANCY LOU EUBANKS, ED.D. *East Texas State University*, 1984. 224pp. Adviser: M. B. Nelson

Purposes of the Study. The purposes of the study were to determine whether or not gains made by Marshall Writing Workshop students were greater over a one-year period than those made by comparable students in a traditional writing program and to determine whether or not the Marshall Writing Workshop was of comparable benefit to three different tenth grade ability groups--honors, regular, and basic.

Procedure. Subjects were a random sample of students in grades seven through ten who were enrolled in two East Texas school districts in 1982-83. Students were matched for sex, race, and English grade point average. Beginning-of-year writing samples and end-of-year writing samples were scored by the Diederich Analytic Scale. Using the *t*-test for correlated groups, two-tailed, with significance at the .05 level, a comparison of pretest scores, posttest scores, and gain scores was made.

Findings. Findings of the study include the following three categories: (1) Pretest Essays--Marshall Writing Workshop students' scores were significantly lower than those of students in a traditional program in grades seven, eight, and ten basic; there were no significant differences in grades nine, ten advanced, and ten regular. (2) Posttest Essays--Marshall Writing Workshop students' mean score was significantly higher for grade ten, advanced and regular. (3) Mean Gain--Marshall Writing Workshop students' mean gain scores were significantly higher in five out of the six groups in the study--grades seven, eight, nine, ten advanced, and ten regular--excepting only the tenth grade basic group.

Conclusions. (1) The Marshall Writing Workshop program produced significantly higher gains in general merit for all groups except the tenth grade basic students. (2) Marshall Writing Workshop students of all levels produced significantly longer posttest essays. (3) The mechanics of writing (usage, punctuation, spelling, handwriting) did not appear to be significantly affected by either workshop or traditional treatment.

CURRICULUM OF MIDDLE SCHOOL: A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF THE TEACHING OF WRITING

Order No. DA8424448

MARTIN, JUNE MARY, PH.D. *Michigan State University*, 1984. 187pp.

The purpose of this study was to describe and explain the writing curriculum of one class of entering middle-school students during one school year. Components studied were the selection and organization, instruction in and evaluation of writing activities. Four exploratory questions guided the study: (1) What writing curriculum does the middle school teacher develop and implement with her students? (2) How does the teacher implement the writing curriculum? (3) What are the responsibilities of the students for enacting the writing curriculum? and (4) What relationship does writing have to other elements of the school curriculum?

Ethnographic methods involved ongoing processes of data collection, and concurrent analysis of data to validate findings by noting repeated observations of similar events, and by triangulation, or by comparing results with other types of evidence. Data sources included field notes, teacher journal entries, interviews, videotapes, writing samples and other school artifacts. Writing activities of a sixth-grade teacher of communication arts and social studies and her students were identified, described and related to one another. The meaning of these writing activities was interpreted from the viewpoints of participants, or insiders, particularly that of the teacher. Findings were also interpreted from the viewpoint of outsiders, that is, form perspectives represented by theorists of curricula, namely, Ralph Tyler, John Dewey, and Paulo Freire.

Findings include the following. The description and explanation of curricular activities illustrate that the teacher selected and implemented interrelated, experience-based, creative writing activities of increasing complexity in view of student needs and interests. She prefigured prerequisite skill lessons with longer, or more complex and creative writing projects to meet her goals that each student experience success, expend his or her best efforts, improve writing skills, and clarify thinking. She shared with her students roles of evaluating, providing individual assistance, modeling writing processes and products, decision-making, and listening to and reading the writings of other students. She also transformed district and school imposed constraints into opportunities for meeting her curricular goals.

A COGNITIVE-PROCESS APPROACH TO COLLEGE COMPOSITION: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF UNSKILLED WRITERS

Order No. DA8421218

MEISER, MARY JORDAN, ED.D. *Harvard University*, 1984. 159pp.

Recent research into the composing process suggests that unskilled writers lack strategies and knowledge of the writing process per se. Thus by focusing on writing strategies and process awareness, instructors may find potential for meaningful intervention into the process. This study investigates the effects of such intervention, of a process approach to teaching unskilled writers at the college level. At the same time, it explores the effects of de-emphasis of the traditional grammar approach. Two major questions focus the research: (1) will students who receive a process approach demonstrate better overall performance on expository writing tasks than those who receive a traditional approach; (2) will students who receive a de-emphasized approach to grammar demonstrate proficiency in this area regardless.

A one semester quasi-experimental study of two basic writing classes (N = 35) was conducted at a state university in the Midwest. Two different instructional approaches were implemented: (1) a process approach consisting of direct instruction in writing strategies, sustained attention to the composing process, and limited instruction in grammar; and (2) a traditional approach heavily concentrated in a grammar workbook. All other instructional and curricular aspects were the same for both classes.

Pre- and post-tests in expository writing, grammar, and process awareness were administered. Analysis of this data (matched-pair, two-tailed *t* tests) indicated that the process-oriented class made statistically significant gains on three of the four writing measures whereas the traditional class made none. Both classes showed a significant difference on the grammar post-test. However, the process class had the higher mean change score. Similarly, both classes demonstrated significant differences on the process awareness measure, but again, the process class had the higher mean change score. The reliability of the instrument, which was developed for this study, may have been a factor in this outcome however. In addition, comparisons were made with two other basic writing classes. Analyses of these results (ANCOVA) generally support the findings for a process approach.

PLUGGING YOUR PENCIL INTO THE WALL: AN INVESTIGATION OF WORD PROCESSING AND WRITING SKILLS AT THE MIDDLE SCHOOL LEVEL

Order No. DA8502008

MILLER, SAMUEL KIRBY, PH.D. *University of Oregon*, 1984. 111pp.
Adviser: Robert Sylwester

This experimental study investigated whether differences existed in writing and attitude toward writing between two groups of 28 sixth grade students, one who revised paragraphs using Apple IIe microcomputers with THE BANK STREET WRITER word processing program and one who used a pencil and paper. During a four-week period the students composed and edited paragraphs prompted by pictures printed in a writing manual. Data to measure writing quantity and writing quality were gathered at four points. Raters trained in holistic writing assessment procedures evaluated typed copies of the students' writing. Data to measure attitudes about writing were derived from surveys completed at the beginning and end of the study. The results indicate no significant differences in writing and attitude toward writing between the groups. Both groups' means were above the midpoint on scaled ratings for quality of paragraphs written and attitude toward writing. Further studies and ideas for using word processors to improve writing skills are suggested.

CRITERIA AND CONSISTENCY OF FRESHMAN COMPOSITION EVALUATION: A NATIONAL STUDY

Order No. DA8423882

MOORE, WAYNE JOHN, JR., PH.D. *North Texas State University*, 1984. 230pp.

The problem this study was concerned with was that of determining the criteria and consistency of college freshman composition in the United States. The purposes were to describe and rank the evaluator factors and criteria reportedly used and actually used; to assess the consistency of evaluations; and to identify relationships between scores assigned freshman writing and various characteristics of evaluators, including evaluator's type of school.

A random sample of 600 members of the College Section of the National Council of Teachers of English received questionnaires and writing samples to evaluate. Three hundred eighty-six responses were included in the testing of the sixteen hypotheses.

The study indicated that there are no significant differences in the mean scores of writing samples scored by evaluators in community colleges, colleges, and universities, that there is more agreement than

disagreement among teachers with regard to criteria, that evaluators assign scores based on their stated criteria, that using factor such as age, gender, school size, hours of composition/rhetoric education, degrees held, years of teaching experience, and method of evaluation are of little use as predictors of scores assigned to writing samples by freshman composition teachers, that few evaluators use scales for the evaluation of writing, that most teachers use the holistic method for evaluation, that ideas expressed and organization are the most important criteria for most evaluators, that teachers assign lower scores to writing samples weak in organization and ideas expressed than to samples weak in mechanics and usage, that teachers most clearly recognize weaknesses in organization when they evaluate writing, and that writing samples should be a major part of any assessment of writing.

THE EFFECTS OF COMPUTER-ASSISTED WRITING ON THE COMPOSING PROCESSES OF BASIC WRITERS

Order No. DA8426448

NICHOLS, RANDALL GRAHAM, PH.D. *The Ohio State University*, 1984. 181pp. Adviser: Professor John C. Belland

More and more basic (developmental/remedial) writers are using word processing programs to compose university-level writing assignments. No research existed which examined changes in composing processes of basic writers who begin using a word processing program for composing. If changes occur, basic writing instructors, designers of word processing systems, and basic writers should be made aware of them. Consequently, this study examined five basic writers who, first, used pen and paper to complete an "in-class" writing assignment. Then they learned to use "BANK STREET WRITER," a word processing program designed for writers at about the middle school level. Then they used the word processing system to complete an assignment similar to the first. During both sessions, their writing and verbalizations about their writing processes were video and audio taped. The writers were interviewed before and after the sessions. Comparisons of the computer-assisted sessions to the conventional sessions revealed the following: reductions in the number of second physical drafts, shorter sessions, increased edits, production of shorter text strings, increased readings of the topic, decreased verbalizations of assessments of texts, greater production of words, system-caused interventions in composing. Each of these results is discussed, with a major conclusion being that computer-assisted writing did not generally affect the goals and plans of these writers.

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE EFFECTS OF SENTENCE COMBINING AND STORY EXPANSION DELIVERED BY WORD PROCESSING MICROCOMPUTERS ON THE WRITING ABILITY OF SIXTH GRADERS

Order No. DA8427993

PIPER, KAREN LEE, ED.D. *Texas Tech University*, 1984. 75pp. Chairperson: Dr. Michael Angelotti

Purpose. This study was designed to investigate the effects of sentence combining and story expansion delivered by word processing microcomputers on the written syntactic maturity of sixth graders in an effort to identify a feasible method of computer-delivered writing instruction.

Procedures. A pretest-posttest analysis of covariance design was used to test the two hypotheses: (1) microcomputer delivery of sentence combining and story expansion would significantly increase the embeddings per T-unit of students in the experimental group as compared to students in the control group, and (2) microcomputer delivery of sentence combining and story expansion would significantly increase the mean T-unit length of students in the experimental group as compared to students in the control group.

The researcher trained sixth grade language arts teacher in word processing and setence combining techniques. Each of three intact sixth grade language arts classes (N = 86) at Bowman Middle School in Plano I.S.D. represented one of the following treatments: (a) combined effects of sentence combining, story expansion, and microcomputer delivery (Group A); (b) sentence combining and microcomputer delivery (Group B); and (c) traditional delivery of sentence combining lessons (Group C).

Appropriate students were trained in word processing and sentence combining. Each teacher introduced one 50-minute setence combining lesson a week during the six week study. Groups used identical sentence combining lessons designed by the researcher.

Pre- and posttests of narrative writing ability stimulated by scripts designed by the researcher were administered one week prior to and following treatment. Tests were analyzed for number of embeddings per T-unit and mean T-unit length. Analysis of covariance was used to determine statistical significance ($p < .05$) of the influence of treatment on writing maturity.

Findings. Based on analysis of covariance, the researcher failed to reject the first hypothesis. There was a statistically significant difference among groups' embeddings per T-unit measures, with scores for Group A increasing more than scores for either Groups B or C. The researcher failed to accept the second hypotheses, which was based on mean T-unit length.

Further research is needed to investigate variables which might increase the effectiveness and feasibility of this technique.

THE EFFECTS OF SENTENCE COMBINING ON THE WRITING OF BASIC WRITERS IN THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Order No. DA8425052

POWELL, JOYCE ELAINE, ED.D. *East Texas State University*, 1984. 225pp. Adviser: Joyce E. Miller

Purpose of the Study. The purpose of this study was to determine the effects of sentence combining on syntactic fluency, judged quality, and frequency of punctuation and usage errors in the writing of community college basic writing students. The specific purpose was to determine the effects of the sentence-combining curriculum of *The English Modules* on the writing of basic writers.

Procedure. The population for this experiment was basic writing students enrolled in Developmental Writing 090 in the fall semester of 1983 on the Cedar Valley campus of the Dallas County Community College. The sample was divided into an experimental and control group; two instructors each taught an experimental and a control class. The treatment consisted of fifteen, forty-five minute sessions of sentence combining from *The English Modules*. The control group studied grammar. The data were drawn from pretest and posttest essays and *Syntactic Maturity Test* (SMT) "Aluminum," written by sixty-one subjects at the beginning and end of the sixteen-week experiment. The essays were typed and coded, and copies were holistically scored by six English teachers. Copies of the same essays were marked for four errors. The investigator marked and tabulated the SMT for T-unit, clause length, and clauses per T-unit.

Findings. Analysis of covariance, with pretests as covariates, was used to compare the groups on syntactic fluency, judged quality, and errors in punctuation and usage. With the same measures, Student's t-test was used to analyze the difference between pretest and posttest means for both groups. The .05 level was set to determine significance.

When the two groups were compared, the experimental group was significant on T-unit length measure of syntactic fluency and on

subject-verb errors. The control group was significant on judged quality. The experimental group reported pretest-posttest significance on all three measures of syntactic fluency and on two errors: fused or comma-spliced and subject-verb agreement.

Conclusion. The increase in syntactic fluency in the experimental group suggests that the sentence-combining curriculum of *The English Modules* had a positive effect on the writing of students in the experimental group. Although it may have produced lower judged quality of writing scores, sentence combining appeared to reduce certain errors.

RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF INTELLECTUAL PROCESSES IN STUDENT WRITING: LINGUISTIC CUES IN THE QUALITY-RATED WRITING OF COLLEGE PRE-FRESHMEN

Order No. DA8428395

QUINN, DENNIS P., PH.D. *Bowling Green State University*, 1984. 149pp.

Based on the work of tagmemicist K. L. Pike, Lee Odell posited the existence of "linguistic cues," specific surface structure features of written prose which reflect the use of five fundamental intellectual processes, here called Physical Context, Sequence, Contrast, Classification, and Change. This study was designed to test Odell's question about whether "there is likely to be a strong connection between a reader's holistic judgment [of an essay's quality] and the relative number of intellectual processes reflected [by the use of linguistic cues] in an essay" (Odell, 1977, p. 130). Odell had found that increased frequency of use of the linguistic cues in students' essays reflected increased "maturity" of their writing.

This study examined the frequency of use of linguistic cues in the "weak," "average," and "sophisticated" placement test essays of seventy-three college pre-freshmen to determine if any correlation could be found to exist between valid, reliable determinations of quality and the frequency of occurrence of linguistic cues.

The statistical tests, Pearson *r* and ANOVA, failed to show any correlation between frequency of use of the linguistic cues and holistic judgments of quality. On the average, all of the students used all of the linguistic cues with approximately equal frequency.

The study concluded that much more work needs to be done regarding Odell's suggestions before it can be said that specific surface structure features of students' prose can be analyzed as determinants of quality.

AUDIENCE AWARENESS AND ADAPTATION IN THE PERSUASIVE WRITING OF PROFICIENT AND NONPROFICIENT COLLEGE FRESHMEN

Order No. DA8427563

RAFOTH, BENNETT A., ED.D. *University of Georgia*, 1984. 188pp. Director: Donald L. Rubin

This study identified important differences between proficient and nonproficient college freshman writers in their handling of a specific audience (reader). It investigated the common assumption that good writers, unlike poor writers, are more aware of their audience and that they are better able to adapt their essays for a particular audience.

Previous theory and research in composition has drawn many links between the quality of persuasive rhetoric and the writer's attention to the needs, interests, and backgrounds of an intended audience. Previous research has also related audience to the writer's capacity for forming multiple perspectives. In general, though, research has been lacking in (1) its attempt to establish specific, situation-based criteria of audience adaptation, and (2) its attempt to connect the mediating influences of a writer's awareness of audience with specific features of written text. This study examined the content of persuasive essays written for a specific audience. Essays were analyzed for adaptations requiring writers' high and low level inferences. Writers were measured for their levels of awareness of specific pieces of information about the audience, as well as for their levels of perspective-taking ability (social cognition) and their attitudes toward the writing topic. These characteristics of the writers were then related to audience adaptations in their essays.

Findings indicate that when minimal information was given about the audience, proficient and nonproficient writers showed equal levels of adaptation. When more information was given, proficient writers took greater advantage of it than nonproficient writers, producing significantly more adaptations, especially those requiring low level inferences; there were no differences between groups in the number of high inference adaptations. Audience awareness was found to be a significant predictor of the number of high inference adaptations that writers made. The outcomes of this study support aspects of the supposed relationship between writing ability and audience adaptation. Findings about the relationship between the final written products and such mediating influences as audience awareness and perspective-taking ability are interpreted in light of current theory.

THE VALIDATION OF THE WRITING ASSESSMENT TEST

Order No. DA8415635

SHELL, KATHY LEE, ED.D. *The Johns Hopkins University*, 1984. 165pp.

The purpose of the study was to design and to validate a criterion-referenced writing test, the Writing Assessment Test (WAT). The test is designed to be used for diagnostic decisions about writing skill strengths and weaknesses in grades four and five.

The subjects consisted of 104 fourth and fifth grade students, 52 achieving writers and 52 low achieving ones. These samples were used in several reliability and validity studies: decision validity, concurrent validity, construct validity, decision reliability and interscorer reliability.

The results of the validity studies indicated the following: (1) decision validity evidence related to the cutting score for the total test revealed 97% correct classifications (2) concurrent validity evidence indicated that the relationships between the WAT and three other writing measures were statistically significant but of varying magnitudes (ranging from .32 to .8). (3) Construct validity evidence of the WAT indicated that three of the oral versus written language correlations were significant, but rather low (less than .39).

Two reliability studies were conducted. The first which used Huynh's method indicated a decision stability index of .90. The second study which examined interscorer reliability yielded a generalizability coefficient of .99.

THE EFFECTS OF ORAL AND ORAL-VISUAL DICTATION EXERCISES ON A SPECIFIC WRITING SKILL OF SELECTED COLLEGE DEVELOPMENTAL STUDENTS

Order No. DA8425885

SIMERAL, RONALD MAURICE, PH.D. *The Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical Col.*, 1984. 148pp. Supervisor: Professor Robert E. Spears

This research was designed to examine the effects of dictation exercises on the scores of developmental students on a test of a specific English writing skill. Additionally, the study examined the differences in these scores based on the preference type scales of the *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator* (MBTI) in order to test the hypothesis that certain MBTI types that handle the oral language well would learn

writing skills faster when exposed to dictation exercises related to those skills.

A pre-test and a post-test were administered to three groups of developmental writing students at Nicholls State University. All three groups were taught writing skills using the controlled composition method which emphasizes imitation and proofreading skills as well as the developmental writing student's facility with the oral language. One treatment group received teacher-rated, student-copied dictation exercises during the 10-day period of the experiment. The second treatment group had dictation delivered by a videotape player and television monitor utilizing a professional dictation voice with the words of the dictation on the video screen. The third group, a control group, received no dictation exercises. The writing skill presented in the classes was the correct use of present progressive, present, past and future tenses. The MBTI scores indicated the subjects' tendencies toward extroversion or introversion and sensing or intuition. It was expected that the extroversion and sensing groups would benefit the most from dictation exercises.

Analysis of the data was developed through an analysis of covariance program that used the pre-test as a covariate in order to refine the significance of the variance of the post-test scores. An additional analysis of covariance was applied to the data using the MBTI scores to develop a factorial design.

Results of the analysis of covariance indicated that there was no statistically significant difference among the three groups or among the various MBTI factorial interactions among the groups. An analysis of variance of the mean gains did show a statistically significant difference for the video dictation group compared to the control group. The use of dictation exercises, especially video dictation, is marginally supported by this study.

ACQUIRING PRACTICAL REASONING THROUGH TEACHER-STUDENT INTERACTION IN DIALOGUE JOURNALS

Order No. DA8428577

STATON, JANA JO, PH.D. *University of California, Los Angeles*, 1984. 558pp. Chair: Professor Frederick S. Ellett, Jr.

This study addresses the problem of how a teacher can help students acquire those concepts, beliefs, strategies and knowledge of themselves, other persons and the world on which rational deliberation and choices about action are based. Such practical reasoning is the heuristic, non-syllogistic rationality which characterizes human action. The thesis of this study is that practical reasoning is gradually acquired through extended interpersonal interactions with adults during which the child learns to observe and practice the relevant concepts and strategies for understanding and acting on the world.

The data for the analysis consist of the complete texts of 26 dialogue journals from a sixth grade class written during the 1979-1980 school year. Dialogue journals are private written conversations which occur daily in this class between each student and their teacher. The dialogue journal texts provide a unique record of the daily, spontaneous thinking of children about the important events of their lives. Methods from discourse analysis and pragmatics were adapted and applied to the texts in order to describe the dialogic structure of these interactions. The dialogue journals are first described in their social context, as communicative events meeting a wide variety of student and teacher needs in the classroom. Then cross-sectional studies of specific features of the interactions across all journals, and longitudinal studies of individual student-teacher dialogues across the school year, are presented.

The cross-sectional studies of elaboration and attributional reasoning demonstrate how the teacher's strategies for discussing everyday experiences differ systematically from those of her students. The dialogue journals allow her to demonstrate informally more explicit, accurate descriptions of shared events, and to provide the students with a more useful, rational model of causal attributions.

The two longitudinal studies follow one major topic in a student's journal across the nine-month school year. These dialogues contain instances of extended "interactional scaffolding" in which the teacher assists the student to re-examine problems from a different perspective, consider alternative actions, and incorporate new information and concepts helpful in that particular context. The dialogue journal texts provide an empirical picture of the actual acquisition of more socially mature and effective reasoning capacities.

A TRANSITION FROM SPEAKING TO WRITING: SMALL-GROUP WRITING CONFERENCES

Order No. DA8427631

THOMAS, DENE KAY, PH.D. *University of Minnesota*, 1984. 319pp.

Theories of group behavior from speech communication and theories of discourse from linguistics, when intersected for the purpose of analyzing small-group writing conferences, provide a framework for studying the transition from speaking to writing. Descriptive research, combining analytical methods from both disciplines, provides insights into communication patterns, changes in communication patterns, motivations for the changes, and, finally, into the relationship between the group process and the writing process.

This descriptive case study analyzes the interaction of one freshman composition teacher and four students who met for a series of six conferences which were part of a freshman composition course at the University of Minnesota. The conferences, taped and transcribed, provide evidence for the benefits of the conference method of teaching composition. This study describes the group process, suggests parallels between the group process and the writing process, and provides an audience acquisition model that illustrates important components of students' writing development. Discussion that is focused on writing helps freshmen make the transition from speakers who are conversationally oriented to writers who are aware of how other minds perceive the world and who can adapt their writing to the needs of an imagined audience.

SOCIO-COGNITIVE CONSTRAINTS IN TRANSACTION: LETTER WRITING OVER TIME

Order No. DA8429337

VARGUS, NANCI REGINELLI, ED.D. *Indiana University*, 1983. 457pp. Chairperson: Dr. Carolyn L. Burke

A class of first graders exchanged weekly individual letters with the researcher and recorded their thoughts daily in journals. Although growth and development was manifested through these meaningful social experiences with written language, of primary research interest was the evolution of register. Children's use of the pragmatic, semantic, syntactic and graphophonemic language cue systems within and across the strategies of negotiability, textual intent, risktaking and fine tuning language with language was empirically documented.

The changes which occurred over time were viewed as an orchestrated response to the transactive nature of socio-cognitive constraints. As a personal relationship developed with the researcher, and as paramount constraints evolved from controlling, perfecting and imitating to creating, trusting and communicating, children explored language in quantitatively and qualitatively different ways. Some statistically significant changes ($p \leq .01$) include: (1) a change

from relying on topics previously introduced to generating new semantic bases for their messages; (2) an increase in the number of words, functional spelling, syntactic variation, t-units, sentences, amount of expansion, and diversity of topics. Other facets of their process as exemplified in their products were consistent: (1) Function was maintained; (2) The percentage of functional spelling was not significantly different; (3) Alternative communication systems were incorporated in the products and their use increased the depth and breadth of their messages.

Major strengths of this study are its ability to validate empirically (1) the power[illegible]uct of one elementary school's expectations for correctness [illegible] children's willingness to explore written language and (2) the pothetial of young children to engage in and grow through meaningful language experience.

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